

To the Chairman of the Health Committee.

SIR,

I have the honour of placing before you my annual report of the sanitary state of the district, and shall adhere to the previous plan I have adopted in these reports by giving you the usual formal record of the births and deaths which have occurred in the borough for the past twelve months. During the year 1893 the number of deaths registered for the borough was 398 (203 males, 195 females), this includes those from premature birth, and cases submitted to the coroner, which gives a death rate of 16·5 per 1,000 of the population for the year. The births numbered 813 (418 males, 395 females), giving a birth rate of 33·8 per 1,000. The deaths of children under *one* year (including premature births and those reported to the coroner) numbered 135, giving a death rate of 16·6 per cent., calculated on the number born during the year. The following table epitomises the ages at which the deaths occurred in the borough :—

Deaths under 1 year	...	...	...	...	...	...	135	} 202	
„ over 1 year and under 5 years	...	...	...	...	...	...	67		under 5 years.
„ „ 5 years	„	15	„	...	...	...	27	} 196	
„ „ 15 „	„	25	„	...	...	...	22		
„ „ 25 „	„	60	„	...	...	...	70		} over 5 years.
„ „ 60 „	„	...	...	...	...	...	77		

I enclose a detailed list of the causes of death and the ages at which they died. In the first quarter of the year we had a continuation of the epidemic of measles which set in towards the end of the year 1892, to which cause 21 deaths were assigned. Also a very considerable number of old people succumbed, 24 deaths being registered of 60 years and over. In the second quarter we had an epidemic of small-pox, otherwise we were all but free from infectious diseases. On the 10th April the first case was reported, which gave rise to considerable excitement in the town, as it was well-known we had no hospital or other place where proper isolation could be carried out, but your Committee took immediate steps to procure such a place, the purchase of Catlow House and its conversion into a temporary hospital being the work of a very short time; in fact, you were complimented by Dr. Sergeant (County Medical Officer of Health) on the admirable arrangements you had made on such short notice. When this case was reported the first step was to get the patient well isolated until some place was obtained. So the other members of the family were removed to the next house, the tenant of which was induced to leave, and a certificated nurse procured. On the 17th a second case was reported in a different part of the town, from a house where there were 13 other inmates. This case was at once removed to where the other case was, but only for a short time, as the temporary hospital was soon ready, and they were both taken there, followed by two more cases on the 21st, Dr. Little, who had been attending the first case, on the 22nd, another on the 23rd, and two on the 24th. It was considered necessary to provide a house surgeon to take charge of the hospital, and Dr. Speechley was appointed. He soon had his hands full, as on the 27th another case (Bertha Walton)—and I may here say it was then we got to the origin of the outbreak. She had been ill some time, and no doubt several members of the family had been, but the cases must have been of a very mild type and were not recognised; in fact, they followed their employment; but, however mild, they were capable of disseminating the contagion, as every case could be traced to more or less contact with someone from that family. Another case (Wensley), who had been attending to the removal of the cases to hospital, assisting in the fumigation of the houses, clothing, &c., on the 29th. The 4th May another,—Walton. 5th May, two more Walton's, and on the 18th, Mrs. Glendenning, the wife of the caretaker at the hospital. On the 11th May, Mrs. Wilmore, Dalton Street, was reported, but refused to go to the hospital. On the 1st June two of her children were



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reported. She then consented, and with her children was removed there, followed the day after by her husband. On the 16th June a case was reported from 54, Pendle Street, the patient having come there a day or two before from Burnley, where his mother was suffering from small-pox; he was taken to the Burnley hospital. On the 28th June a case (the last) from 14, Walton Street. In every case isolation was enforced as soon as possible, re-vaccination where practicable, and the house thoroughly disinfected. I am pleased to say we had no deaths, and with the exception of Wilmore's children scarcely any pitting or disfigurement. The difference between the unvaccinated and the vaccinated was very marked, the former being very bad cases, the latter of a very mild type. In the third quarter of the year Diarrhœa was very prevalent, eleven deaths being recorded. In the last quarter diseases of the lungs and air passages were most prevalent, Bronchitis heading the list with 22 deaths.

In glancing over the detailed list of the causes of death you will observe the abnormal number of deaths from premature birth (24); this materially raises our death rate. Under the Notification of Infectious Diseases Act 174 cases have been reported, viz.:—105 Scarlet Fever, 26 Diphtheria, 19 Enteric Fever, 3 Puerperal Fever, and 21 Small-pox. The latter (Small-pox) occurred only in April, May, and June. Scarlet Fever was present more or less all the year, the greatest number of cases occurring in March and November. Diphtheria was most prevalent in February and December. Enteric Fever in September. In every case the Sanitary Inspector took immediate steps to see that the drains and ashpits were in good order, and gave a plentiful supply of disinfectants. In many cases (especially in Scarlet Fever), before medical advice was sought, other members of the family were attending school, thus spreading the disease. The houses from which Small-pox was reported were specially dealt with; the weaving shed where some had been employed, also the school; in fact every precaution was taken to stamp out that loathsome malady.

In the Sanitary Department a great deal of work has been done during the year. The Sewage Works were opened in the early part of the summer, and are now in successful operation. The scavenging has been efficiently carried on by the Corporation; the ashes deposited at tips; excreta carted on to farms; garbage and offal treated at the refuse destroyer. The bakehouses have been inspected, also the slaughter-houses, and a very exhaustive report submitted on their condition by the Borough Engineer. Under the operation of the Cowsheds and Dairies Act very considerable improvements and structural alterations have been carried out on no less than forty farms.

Mr. Priestley (the Sanitary Inspector) has kindly informed me that he has reported 570 privies and 449 cesspools for alteration to the water carriage system. Several mill owners have had to make considerable alterations so as to provide proper and adequate closet accommodation for the sexes. A great number of miscellaneous nuisances have received attention, but in only three cases have legal proceedings been instituted, viz.:—over-crowding, insanitary condition of manure midden, and failure to report Small-pox. All three were convicted. The lodging-house at Clough Bottom has been enlarged during the year, affording accommodation for 83 more beds. This house continues to be well managed.

A great amount of work has been carried out in the Surveyor's department. Mr. Bradley (Borough Surveyor) has kindly supplied the following:—During the last twelve months 2,900 lineal yards of main sewers, 3,270 lineal yards of branch sewers, 280 gullies, 97 manholes, and 110 yards of brick culvert have been constructed, 68 streets have been paved having an aggregate length of over three miles, $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles of foot-way have been flagged.

No legal proceedings were required with regard to any animal, carcase, meat, poultry, game, fish, or fruit during the year. No noxious or offensive trade has been brought under my notice. I am also pleased to say that notwithstanding the very dry summer we had a plentiful supply of good water, and that looking all round, the sanitary conditions of the borough are very satisfactory.

I am,

Yours obediently,

A. P. MILLAR.



Nelson Corporation.

1893.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

ANNUAL

REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health.

A. P. MILLAR, M.D.,
NELSON.